



## IDAHO GUARDIAN AD LITEM NEWS

From the Desk of Nanci Thaemert, State GAL Coordinator

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Winter Edition

### Happy Holidays from the State GAL Office!

Greetings!

I hope everyone has weathered the summer and fall. The kids are back in school and as usual, reports of abuse and neglect have risen. With that comes an increase in caseloads and an increase in need for already stretched resources. As I'm sure everyone is acutely aware of, the state faces a possible \$340 million budget shortfall. When the state legislators get back into Boise in January, they face the huge challenge of balancing the budget. No one is sure how the legislators will make up for the millions of lost revenue, but it will likely mean cuts to



programs and services across the state. Be prepared for holdbacks in next year's legislative allocation to the CASA programs. I'll keep everyone updated as the 2011 session gets underway.

On a more positive note, The CASA programs continue to grow and thrive. Our goal of serving every abused and neglected child in Idaho with a volunteer Guardian ad Litem is closer than ever. We have over 550 volunteers currently serving children in Idaho, with several large classes of new volunteers getting ready to take cases. To put this in perspective, at the start of fiscal year 2008, the CASA programs had 359 volunteers.

This is an almost 54 percent increase in the number of volunteers in just three years! Everyone should be incredibly proud of the growth in volunteers we have cultivated in one of the worst economic downturns our country has seen. I continue to be amazed and proud of the resilience and combined knowledge of everyone who contributes to the CASA mission in Idaho.

Keep up the good work and let me know how I can continue to support the efforts of every volunteer and program who serves the children of Idaho. I wish everyone a safe, happy and restful holiday season.

*- Nanci Thaemert*

### Welcome Sandra Gunn, North Idaho CASA Executive Director!

The North Idaho CASA program in the 1st Judicial District has welcomed a new Executive Director to their team! Sandra Gunn is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who has worked extensively with families and children through many different life situations. Sandra is also the former owner of the Coeur d'Alene Olive Oil Company in down-

town Coeur d'Alene. After a few short weeks on the job, Sandra has already been "surprised by the dedication our advocates have for our CASA kids...I have a new found appreciation in people who volunteer their time." When asked what she's looking forward to in 2011, Sandra said she is, "looking forward to having a strong program, many fun and

productive fundraising events, and for everyone in my District to know what work CASA does. No more people saying, "What is CASA?" Those days are behind us." We are very excited to have Sandra join our team, and look forward to her enthusiasm and innovation.



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## Making Board Service Fulfilling

Board service on nonprofits can be fulfilling and engaging, or the opposite. Following is a checklist you may want to consider in examining your role as a director of a nonprofit. This checklist is not necessarily all inclusive, but reflecting on the issues raised in this checklist can help you determine whether there are important issues that may need to be addressed either personally or organizationally.

- Do you know why you were asked to serve on the board and what the board's expectations of you are?
- Are you committed to being a good director and helping advance not only the mission of the organization, but the governance of the organization?
- Do you have a copy of the organization's charter, bylaws and mission statement, and have you read them?

- Is there a code of conduct for directors and do you have a copy?
- Do you and other directors have copies of other critical board policies and are you aware of other policies that may be legally required for your organization?
- Who in the organization is responsible for filing tax forms related to the organization's nonprofit status and who reviews those forms?
- Are you and other directors engaged in the work of the board and the organization?
- Is the board functioning effectively, with regular well-attended and well-run meetings addressing important issues?
- Does the board periodically review its own effectiveness? Is there a well-understood process for recruiting new directors, with established criteria for seeking particular directors?

Aside from asking, to be sure there is a good fit between your expectations and those of the organization, considering the governance practices of the organization may also help you understand how well the organization functions and accomplished its mission and how effective your service as a director is. You can find more information at the Society of Corporate Secretaries and Governance Professionals:

<http://www.governanceprofessionals.org/society/default.asp?SnID=1834416810>



*"We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today." - Stacia Tauscher*

## News and Notes from around the State

Just because the year is quickly coming to a close doesn't mean that the programs across the state aren't working extra hard this holiday season!

On November 1st, the Supreme Court celebrated National Adoption Day by opening the court to the final adoption proceedings for 10 families in the 3rd and 4th Districts. This was the first time in the Court's long history that adoptions were finalized in the main courtroom. In addition, the Chief Justice signed a proclamation, and the court hosted a reception open to the public to celebrate the day's events.



An unusual site at the Supreme Court...bears, balloons, and a festive atmosphere in the main court chambers. Photo Courtesy: Treasure Valley Adoption Council

In the 4th District, they wrapped up another successful Gingerbread Gala.

This annual event which pulls in gingerbread artists of all ages, includes amateur and professional categories, as well as a silent auction. This year's fundraiser was a great success, and kicked off a holiday season full of events designed to support both CASA and Family Advocates efforts in the valley.

In the 7th District, it's full steam ahead as they prepare to welcome a new Child Protection judge to the bench. After thirty five years, Judge Linda Cook has retired, and the program is welcoming Judge Ralph Savage into the world of CP

cases. Additionally, Nanci will be visiting Idaho Falls later in December for a volunteer attorney training, designed to recruit GAL Attorneys in both the 6th and 7th Districts. A similar training has been held in the 1st and 3rd/4th Districts this year, with excellent results.

If you have news or notes you'd like to share from your program, please let Nanci or Janice know! We'll be happy to include it in our Spring 2011 newsletter.



Gingerbread Gala First Place winner in the Group Division—Kim Severns and her team's entry, "The Three Little Pigs"



## Contacting Donors in a Digital Age

Your greatest challenge as an email fundraiser is your list. If your organization is typical, only 10% of the people in your donor file have given you their email address. And that list isn't growing any larger all on its own.

**Want to use e-mail more effectively to contact your donors and generate more contributions? It all begins with your list....**

4. On your Frequently Asked Questions page, make one of the questions about the availability of email correspondence, and answer the question by describing the email newsletters, alerts, prayer letters, bulletins and other emails that you publish.

Email fundraising is new, but email isn't. So donors and potential donors don't divulge their email addresses easily. They're tired of spam. They're afraid of online fraud. They're protective of their inboxes. So getting your donors, potential donors and strangers to give you their email addresses is tough. Here are 10 ways to encourage people to give you access to their inboxes in record time. You can deploy some of these tactics immediately, and see immediate results. Some of the other recommendations will take a little longer. But either way, if you set out in a deliberate, long-term way to acquire as many email addresses as possible from people who ask to hear from you, you'll build a list of email subscribers that quickly becomes your greatest asset next to your donor file.

1. Aim to get the email addresses of both donors and non-donors. Advocates, volunteers, anonymous website visitors and other non-donors who sign up for your email newsletters, action alerts and other email correspondence are prime prospects for donations (just be patient).

2. Mention your donor email newsletter in articles and stories on your website, making the newsletter title a hotlink that points to your sign-up page. ("In our latest email issue of Darfur Digest, we described the worsening situation in southern Sudan").

3. On pages that donors are re-directed to after making a donation on your website, include a link to your email sign-up page and a compelling reason for donors to sign up.

5. If your staff take part in online forums, make sure they mention your email newsletter discretely when posting their comments, as a way to encourage other forum participants to learn more about the topic being discussed.

6. If you run a walkathon, golf tournament or other outdoor fundraiser, make the sign-up process include email addresses so you can keep participants, suppliers, volunteers and organizers informed before and after the event.

7. Require your major donor officers to ask all prospects and donors if they would like to receive email updates on how their gift is being used.

8. Whenever you ask donors or advocates to complete a petition (offline or online), ask for their email address.

9. Track which issues of your newsletter, or which appeal emails, generate the largest number of donations, and then use these same subjects or appeals when attracting new donors and members.

10. When hosting a fundraising banquet, invite guests to supply their email addresses as part of the event.

These tips are taken from *Build Your List of Email Donors in 80 Simple Ways*, Handbook 24 in the Hands-On Fundraising Series published by Andrew Spencer Publishing.

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### About the Author

Alan Sharpe is president of Raiser Sharpe, a direct mail fundraising agency that helps non-profit organizations raise funds, build relationships and retain loyal donors. Sign up for free weekly tips like this at [www.RaiserSharpe.com](http://www.RaiserSharpe.com).



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## Santa is Alive and Well...and We are on His Team!

I remember my first Christmas party with Grandma. I was just a kid. I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"

My grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her world-famous cinnamon buns.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus!" she snorted. "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad. Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second cinnamon bun. "Where" turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything.

As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days.

"Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping.



For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for. I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my

neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church. I was just about through, when I suddenly thought of Bobbie Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's second grade class.

Bobbie Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out for recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobbie Decker didn't have a cough, and he didn't have a coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobbie Decker a coat. I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that. "Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down.

"Yes," I replied shyly. "It's ... for Bobbie." The nice lady smiled at me. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag and wished me a Merry Christmas. That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat in Christmas paper and ribbons, and write, "To Bobbie, From Santa Claus" on it -- Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobbie Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially one of Santa's helpers.

Grandma parked down the street from Bobbie's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going."

I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his doorbell and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma. Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobbie.

Forty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my grandma, in Bobbie Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were: ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

~ Author Unknown ~



*"The best of all gifts around any Christmas Tree:  
the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other."*

*- Burton Hillis*